

Gathering Question: What is your definition of hope? Share with each other a story from your life that exemplifies hope.

Will Your Anchor Hold?

“If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.” I Corinthians 15:19.

Our bodies have been constructed to withstand an enormous amount of stress and pressure. God has made us to be fairly resilient people. We can survive in weather extremes, both hot and cold. We can endure through seasons of illness, financial reversals, domestic disappointments, unemployment, and even the death of someone who is near and dear to us. We can endure if we do not lose hope.

Take away hope and we tend to toss in the towel in only a few seconds. God knows that about us and so he calls hope the anchor of our souls (Hebrews 6:19). As long as we have hope, we can endure almost everything in life. But that “anchor” must be in the right place. If it is anchored in a fallen world, we ARE of all humans most to be pitied. But if it anchored above, beyond the fallenness here, we have a resource that will carry us through to the end.

There are so many examples of those whose hope was a sure anchor against the stress of life. Moses, Joseph, Deborah, and David are just a few of those who were anchored above and were able to stand against incredible odds. One of the greatest examples of hope in Scripture is Abraham. God promised him that through his seed all nations of the earth would be blessed. Abraham left his homeland and journeyed to Palestine. He was 75 and his wife Sarah was 65 when they entered the land of promise. They were childless but they still had hope. A year passed and still no baby. Ten years pass, then another ten. They asked God if their chief servant could be their heir. He said no. They tried to work things out by having Abraham provide an heir through the servant girl. Again God said no. Abraham was 100 and Sarah 90 when the angel told them that by this time next year you will have a son and you are to name him Isaac (little laughing boy).

Paul commenting on all this wrote in Romans 4:18 about Abraham, “In hope against hope he believed.” When it made no sense he trusted the One who was above all the fallenness. His anchor was not set in the shifting sands of life here on earth. It was seated in God.

Read: Hebrews 6:13-20; Genesis 12:1-4; 15:1-21; 16:1-6; 17:15-22; Romans 4:18-21

Reflect:

1. Read Genesis 15. In your own words describe the strange event of the split animals and the firepot. What did this mean to Abraham and what does it have to do with hope?
2. What are the “two unchangeable things” the writer is describing in Hebrews 6:18?
3. In what ways is hope an anchor for the soul. What significance is there in the fact that hope “enters the inner shrine behind the curtain?” Hebrews 6:19.